

## Living L.O.W.D. (Loving Others Without Discretion) How does God love us?

personal / group study for use with the message of November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**“You will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked” (Luke 6:35).**

How does God love us? How does He see us? The Bible says that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! (Romans 8:6-8) Over and over the Bible teaches us that God loved us first, that Jesus came to seek and to save, to be a servant to all.

### Introduction.

This three week series will help us to put into practice what we have learned through the Prodigal God lessons. How do we experience God's love in a practical way? How can we live an abundant life enjoying God's unfailing love and how we can live out that love in generosity to others.

### Read.

#### **Luke 6:27-36)**

#### **Love for Enemies**

<sup>27</sup>“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup>If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup>“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. <sup>34</sup>And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he **is kind to the ungrateful and wicked**. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

#### **Matthew 5:44-46**

<sup>44</sup>But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. **He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.** <sup>46</sup>If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

*\*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.*

### Questions.

#### **ThinkAboutIt...**

1. How do you view God? A mean kill joy? A Santa like being? A faithful Creator? A loving Father? The Savior of the world?

#### **ReflectOnIt...**

2. Read the two passages above: how does God treat people? Jesus' teaching on loving your enemies was a radical teaching. What does Jesus teach about God's kind of love?

3. Does God care for His creation because we deserve His care? What do we deserve?
4. What have you learned about the love of God through the Prodigal God messages?

**RespondTolt...**

5. How can you settle in your mind that God loves you always?

*"But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for He has been good to me. Psalm 13:5-6.*

*Extra: Read Hosea 2:14-23 and Hosea 3:1. God shows us His unfailing love to His people through the marriage of Hosea to an unfaithful wife. In obedience to God Hosea "redeems" his wife, Gomer from prostitution. Just as God in Christ redeemed us by paying our debt on the cross.*

*Read Jonah 4:2, 4:11. God in His mercy sends Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh.*

## Living L.O.W.D. (Loving Others Without Discretion) Loving Those Closest to Us.

personal / group study for use with the message of November 21st and 22nd, 2009

**“Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:21).**

Since God loves us, we should love one another. God wants us to love those who are closest to us, but those are often the people that are most difficult for us to love. Learning to see our family as God sees them is not easy; God wants to love others through you. Pray that the Holy Spirit would enable you to love those you are closest with.

### Introduction.

This is the second of a three week series will help us to put into practice what we have learned through the Prodigal God lessons. How do we experience God’s love in a practical way? How can we live an abundant life enjoying God’s unfailing love and how can we live out that love toward others?

### Read.

**John 15:12: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”**

**1 John 2:9: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness”.**

**1 John 4:7-20 God's Love and Ours:**

**“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son<sup>[a]</sup> into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for<sup>[b]</sup> our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**

<sup>13</sup>We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup>And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup>In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. **And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”**

**Colossians 3:12-14: “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup>And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”**

## Questions.

### ThinkAboutIt...

1. Isn't it great that even though we are all sinful people, because of Jesus we can be called "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved"?
2. Are you able to love others because you are secure in God's love for you?

### ReflectOnIt...

3. Read the two passages above: where does love come from? How did God show His love to us?
4. What is the command God gives us in these passages?
5. Why are we to love our brother? How can you love your brother?

### RespondToIt...

6. As you dress in the morning, clothe yourself with the virtues listed in Colossians 3. What binds all of these virtues together?

*"But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for He has been good to me. Psalm 13:5-6.*

**Extra:** Read Galatians 5:22-23. Memorize these two verses and pray for the Holy Spirit to continue developing His fruit in your life.

**To live a love-filled life is to be God-filled.---Ryrie**

## Living L.O.W.D. (Loving Others Without Discretion) Loving Others By Building Bridges, not walls

personal / group study for use with the message of November 28th and 29th, 2009

**“Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest!” (John 4:35)**

Since God loves us, we should love one another. God wants us to love those who are outside of His family. Loving others without an agenda is what God calls us to. In response to God’s lavish unconditional love we are commanded to love others. Do you let differences divide you from people? Pray that God would change your heart toward others. But get ready love can be messy!

### Introduction.

This is the third of a three week series will help us to put into practice what we have learned through the Prodigal God series. God wants you to build bridges to people that are morally different than you, religiously different than you, politically different than you, etc.. Listen to people tell their story, share your story and then give them HIS story.

### Read.

**John 15:12:** *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

**Luke 5:30-32:** *“Why do you eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners?” Jesus answered, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to turn back to God.”*

**John 4:4-27:** <sup>4</sup>Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>7</sup>When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?” <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”

<sup>13</sup>Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

<sup>16</sup>He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” <sup>17</sup>“I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup>The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

<sup>19</sup>“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

<sup>25</sup>The woman said, **“I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”**

<sup>26</sup>**Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”**

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

*\*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.*

## Questions.

### ThinkAboutIt...

1. Who is the person that you avoid?
2. What do you let divide you?

### ReflectOnIt...

3. How did God show His love to us?
4. Who needs a physician?
5. Why did Jesus go out of his way to go through Samaria?
6. How does Jesus engage this woman? Does he reject her when she shares information about her trouble life?
7. What is the important message he wants to share? Does he share it before or after he listens?
8. What does Jesus teach his disciples about the harvest?

### RespondToIt...

9. Practice asking a person their story. REALLY LISTEN. Then venture to tell a little of your story. Now you can tell how HIS story has impacted your story.
10. Pray for someone you really don't like, ask God to soften your heart and to see that person with His eyes.
11. Offer to pray for someone this week that you encounter who has spiritual/physical needs. Don't offer judgment, just prayer.

**Enter into a dialog. Listen to their story. Share your story. Tell His story. Show others Jesus' love!**